

What is Claimed is:

1 5. The communications system of Claim 1, wherein the user terminal (110)
2 communicates with the communications platform (106) in a first frequency band, and the
3 communications platform communicates with the gateway (108) in a second frequency
4 band.

[illegible]

[illegible]

1 7. The communications system of Claim 1, wherein the system comprises at
2 least two communication platforms in overlapping positions.

1 9. The communication system of Claim 1, wherein the information is
2 transponded according to a coding technique selected from the group comprising time
3 division multiple access (TDMA) and code division multiple access (CDMA).

1 11. The communications system of Claim 1, wherein the gateway (108)
2 comprises a plurality of gateway antennae (402), separated from each other by a distance
3 sufficient to provide spatial diversity in communicating with the communications
4 platform (106).

Cont.

[illegible]

1 16. The method of claim 12, wherein the first signal is transponded by one of a
2 plurality of beams to the gateway (108) having a plurality of antennae disposed to provide
3 spatial diversity among each of the plurality of beams.

1 14. The communication system of Claim 1, wherein the information is
2 transponded according to a coding technique selected from the group comprising time
3 division multiple access (TDMA) and code division multiple access (CDMA).

[illegible]

6 transponding the first signal from the stratosphere-based communications
7 platform to a gateway ground station.

1 17. The signal of claim 15, wherein the first signal is transmitted in one of a
2 plurality of beams to the gateway ground station having a plurality of antennae disposed
3 to provide spatial diversity among each of the plurality of beams.

1 18. A method for communicating from a user terminal, comprising:
2 receiving a first signal from the user terminal having an antenna in a stratosphere-
3 based communications platform, wherein the communications platform maintains an
4 apparent position relative to the user terminal within a beamwidth of a user terminal
5 antenna;
6 transponding the first signal from the stratosphere-based communications
7 platform to a gateway ground station.

1 24. The communications system of claim 23, wherein:
2 the user terminal includes a user terminal antenna characterizable by a beamwidth;
3 and
4 the communications platform maintains an apparent position relative to the user
5 terminal within the beamwidth of the user terminal antenna.

Figure 1 consists of 12 micrographs arranged in two columns of six. The left column shows the early stages of development: (a) fertilization, (b) cleavage, (c) cleavage, (d) gastrulation, (e) gastrulation, and (f) gastrulation. The right column shows the later stages: (g) neurulation, (h) neurulation, (i) tail formation, (j) tail formation, (k) hatching, and (l) hatching. Each image is labeled with a letter and a scale bar is provided at the bottom right.

1 26. The communications system of claim 23, wherein the gateway comprises a
2 plurality of gateway antennae, separated from each other by a distance sufficient to
3 provide spatial diversity in communicating with the communications platform.

1 27. The communications system of claim 26, wherein the distance is at least
2 200 meters.